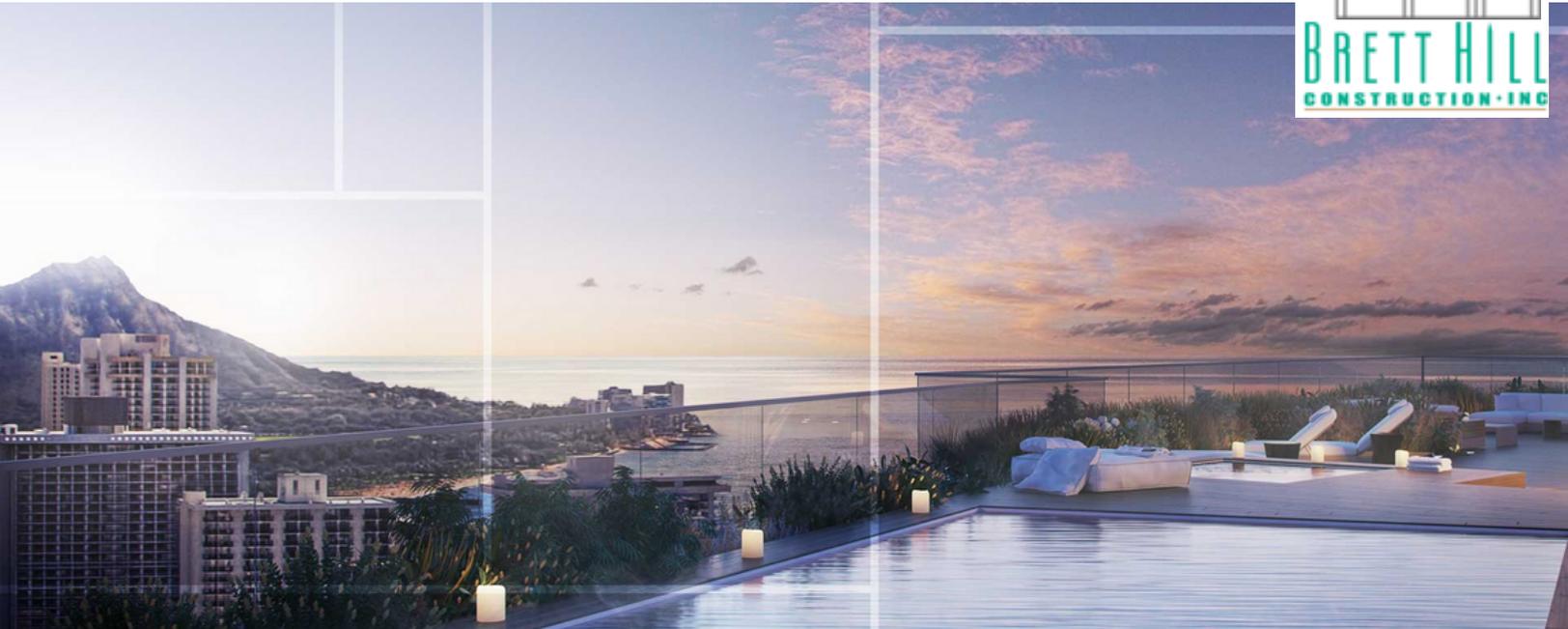


URBAN

Winter 2020 concepts



The Holiday Season

Season's Greetings! We hope Holiday cheer has found its way into your home, even though this year may have significantly altered your way of life. Life during this time has been challenging for most but let's hope we will get back to some normalcy soon. This year, although our gatherings may be much smaller and intimate, we shouldn't feel like we're in isolation. A lot of you will be using resources like Zoom to connect with your family and friends so we hope it makes us feel like everyone's home for the holidays.

For most of us we've been blessed with good health and happiness in our lives, but we must never forget the plight of those less fortunate. It's because of this that we ask if you could support organizations that assist those in need such as the Hawaii Foodbank, the Salvation Army, Helping Hands Hawaii and Catholic Charities Hawaii. These organizations provide an invaluable service this time of the year, especially during a year like we are currently experiencing.

In this edition we will share with you an article on mold & mildew prevention in your home, holiday champagne, holiday shopping during a pandemic, several different recipe ideas you can do with a Belgian waffle maker and a local produce.

We hope you enjoy our Holiday issue of Urban Concepts and please have a happy but safe Holiday Season. Mele Kalikimaka me ka Hau'oli Makahiki Hou!

Mahalo,
Brett Hill Construction, Inc.

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Mold and Mildew Prevention

In Hawaii, mold and its by product mildew have been a well publicized topic that is often a major issue in the construction industry. If left to thrive, mold and mildew in your home can be a major problem as it can cause considerable damage to your furniture, carpet and clothing, as well as bring on medical symptoms for those who are sensitive. Because of our warm humid weather, we see this as a chronic problem that requires certain necessary measures for prevention.

Mold prevention should always be taken seriously especially for those who are sensitive to molds, as exposure can cause symptoms such as nasal stuffiness, eye irritation or wheezing. Some of us that have serious allergies to molds may have more severe reactions such as fever and shortness of breath. In addition, those with chronic illnesses, such as obstructive lung disease, may develop mold infections in their lungs if frequently exposed. This article talks about the different preventative measures you can take in order to keep mold & mildew growth from happening in your home.



Keep Things Clean

Keep closets, dresser drawers, basements - any place where mildew is likely to grow - as clean as possible. Soil on articles can supply enough food for mildew to start growing when the moisture and temperature are right. Greasy films, such as those that form on kitchen walls, also contain many nutrients for mildew-causing molds.

Get Rid of Excess Moisture

1. Remove or correct the cause

The first step in mildew control is to try to control the dampness inside the home. Cooking, laundering and bathing without adequate ventilation adds three gallons of water to the air everyday. The dampness is caused by condensation of moisture from humid air onto cooler surfaces. To cure these conditions, make sure your stove fan filter is periodically cleaned, the dryer is venting properly and the exhaust fans in your bathrooms are clear of dust build up.

A more serious cause of moisture in your home would come from a water leak from plumbing or a clogged air conditioner drain pan. This matter must be addressed immediately once detected as it would not only be a cause of rapid and widespread mold infestation, but could also cause major damage to your home as well as your neighbors home.



2. Dry the air

According to the EPA, the ideal humidity level for indoors to prevent mold from forming is at 30 to 50%. These levels would be difficult to attain in Hawaii as our air is naturally high in humidity - usually between the mid 60 to 90% level. Properly-installed air conditioning systems remove moisture from the living area by taking warm air, cooling it (removing the moisture) and circulating the dry air back into the room. You can also use dehumidifiers in areas that are not properly air conditioned, especially in areas where air does not circulate as well such as closets. Other ways to keep your home's air dry is to open windows to let out the moisture-laden air and to use fans to continue to push the air.



3. Circulate the air

Air movement is very important to removing moisture. When the air outside is drier than the air inside, the dry air enters, takes up excess moisture then travels back outside. When natural breezes are not sufficient, you can use air conditioners, fans or dehumidifiers to assist in the drying process.

A poorly-ventilated closet gets damp and musty during continued wet weather, and articles stored in them will be exposed to mildew. Try to improve the air circulation by opening the closet doors or by installing a fan. In addition, hang clothes loosely so air can circulate around them.

Cooking, laundering, and bathing are major causes of moisture in the home. They can cause excessive moisture build-up unless circulation is adequate. It is often necessary to use some type of exhaust fan and to keep those fans and its vents clear of dust and dirt build up.

Mold is always an important issue with residents of Hawaii, and the best way to keep it a non-issue with you is to be proactive. And as we approach the cooler winter months, we must keep in mind that the ambient air, although cooler, is still high in humidity, so the same best practices must still be applied.



A HOLIDAY SEASON FAVORITE

By: Roberto Viernes, Master Sommelier

Champagne is always a prerequisite for celebrating the Holidays, and the hottest trend in the Champagne business is the movement of connoisseurs from the BIG Houses (i.e. Moët et Chandon, Veuve Clicquot, etc.) to smaller producers. These small producers come under a category called Recoltant Manipulants or 'Grower Champagnes'.

These smaller producers makes Champagne using grapes from vineyards they cultivate and grow themselves, while the Big Houses purchase anywhere from 50% to 100% of their fruit from these individual growers to produce their bubbly. For Grower Champagne producers, being hands-on allows them to control the quality of their Champagne from soil to grape and from juice to sparkle.

Another reason why they are becoming so popular is that many of these smaller houses are the producers of only on village. The large majority of Champagnes are a blend of many different villages, effectively blending away any of the unique and interesting flavors each village as to offer. These small producers are like virtuosos of the Champagne world. While Big Houses, like symphonies are beautiful, the small producers are the highly-skilled solo performers.

So, this holiday season if you want to try something unique, here are some great Grower Champagnes that are as beautiful, and in many cases, better than their Big House counterparts for less money.

NV Margaine Brut Traditionelle This is really smooth and silky Champagne with wonderful aromas and flavors of toast, freshly baked cookie dough, poached apples and pears.

NV Pierre Peters Cuvee de Reserve Superbly elegant and made form 100% Grand Cru Chardonnay. Zesty, yet creamy with tons of sweet red apple and vanilla fruit.

2000 Vilmart 'Coeur de Cuvee' This is the proverbial 'bomb!' It is awesomely complex with a distinctly masculine touch. This is a showstopper.

Even through this year our gatherings and celebrations will be much smaller and more intimate, as we approach the Holiday Season, remember, a good champagne is always a great option that will definitely be a hit with any gathering.

Roberto Viernes is a Master Sommelier and the Hawaii Associate State Manager for Ste Michelle Wine Estates. Instagram: @filwines



HOLIDAY SHOPPING: DURING A PANDEMIC



With shipping delays, crowd limitations and mall hours of operation continuously changing, we must get creative with our gift giving this holiday season. In this article, I will share clever ideas for unique and useful gifts during this "untraditional" holiday season.

As a result of the coronavirus pandemic, delivery service companies have experienced an increase in demand. Popular companies such as Doordash, Grubhub and UberEats allow you to choose from a variety of different food establishments and have your food delivered right to your doorstep, with a small delivery fee. Most of these companies offer contactless delivery and you can track their location and estimated time of arrival all through an app. Back in September, my cousins had their first child, but due to the COVID-19 rules at that time we weren't able to throw them a party to celebrate. This forced us to get creative and think of our own way to congratulate and show them that we care (from a distance). We decided to order them food from their favorite local restaurant and had it delivered to their house, through Grubhub, this allowed us to send our love to them as well as support a local business. Due to many people still feeling wary about going out to eat at crowded restaurants, these delivery companies will continue to be popular and available for many local restaurants, making a gift card or even a pre ordered meal from one of these known delivery companies the perfect most useful gift for a friend or any family member to enjoy!



Another notable idea for a gift this year, is a subscription to a meal kit service such as HelloFresh or Blue Apron. Somewhat similar to the delivery services mentioned earlier, this allows customers to make a meal of their choice, using ingredients delivered right to their doorstep. The cool thing about this type of service is that they allow you to choose from a variety of different, easy to follow recipes and send the fresh, high quality ingredients needed straight to your home. Many people have been choosing to go this route when ordering through delivery service apps because it's healthier, sustainable, more cost effective when compared to ordering take out every night and you know exactly how and where your food is being prepared (since you are the one who will be preparing it). This is a great way to get the whole household involved with cooking a home cooked meal together all while skipping the "not so fun" parts like driving to the grocery store and searching for ingredients.



With stores and malls having to reduce their capacity by half, we are left wondering what holiday shopping and Black Friday will be like this year. Assuming more people will be resorting to online shopping, popular, big box retailer sites like Amazon and Macy's are more likely to see delayed shipping times, especially to us here in Hawaii. Many local markets and events were also forced to shut down due to the pandemic, driving most of them to create a digital space for the many small local businesses that relied heavily on these markets to make their living. Different from shopping just any big company's website, local virtual markets are a one stop outlet to access hundreds of local vendors, from all different islands, with products ranging from locally produced snacks, handmade jewelry, clothing, artwork and even pet products. This one stop gateway is a place where you can find unique gifts from all local brands and artists, support local and the best part, you can do it from the comfort and safety of your own home.

MADE IN HAWAII FESTIVAL ONLINE MARKETPLACE

MADEINHAWAIIFESTIVAL.COM

This festival is usually held once a year and features hundreds of local vendors from all over the state, but due to the pandemic they created an online space for shoppers to continuously shop these vendors throughout the rest of the year. A great feature is that you can shop the different brands and items all of these vendors have to offer and checkout all at once, rather than subjecting your credit card and shipping information through all kinds of different websites, talk about ONE STOP SHOP.

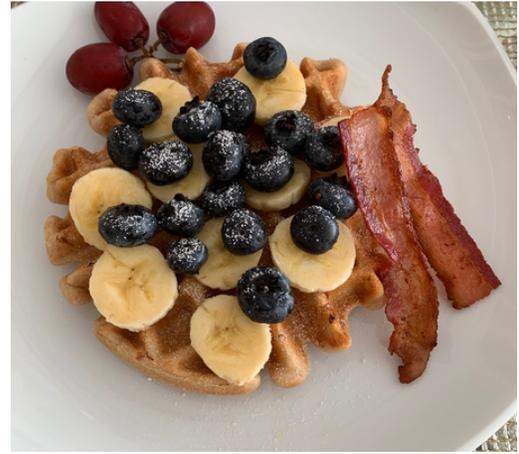


If you prefer to do your holiday shopping in person, a great place to do so is at a local market. There are a few markets that have started up again, just in time for the holidays. The main benefit of shopping these markets are that you are able to support local businesses and vendors that have unique locally made items that are perfect for gifts. Since these markets are just opening back up again, due to forced closures as a result of the pandemic, they are extra careful with following Covid-19 rules and have sanitization stations throughout the market as well as follow the proper social distancing guidelines.

The Aloha Home Market is a great example of an organization that is dedicated to showcasing local owned businesses. This market is usually put on monthly, but just recently started back up again. They have coordinated 3 separate market days in order to spread out the amount of people attending each day, to ensure that we can all shop safely!



We just bought a Belgian Waffle Maker!



Alas, as my wife and I are getting older and the children have left the nest, we are always looking for husband and wife activities, and now especially at home.

Henceforth, we bought a Cuisinart double griddle Belgian waffle maker.

Our latest weekends now include at least one meal that incorporates this "foodie weapon".

Here are our first series of experiments:

- **Belgian Waffle Experiment #1:** Mochi Belgian waffles sprinkled with powdered sugar (not pictured).
- **Belgian Waffle Experiment #2:** Corn beef hash & hash browns combination Belgian waffles with an over easy egg on top (pictured: top left).
- **Belgian Waffle Experiment #3:** Macaroni & cheese Belgian waffles (pictured: bottom left).
- **Belgian Waffle Experiment #4:** Buckwheat Belgian waffles with blueberries & bananas (pictured: top right).
- **Belgian Waffle Experiment #5:** Buttermilk Belgian waffles with strawberries & walnuts (pictured: top middle).



Note: You can select pancake batter mixes to use for the Belgian waffle maker if you cannot find specific waffle batter mixes. Just add 1 tablespoon of vegetable oil and thicken the pancake batter a bit so it has a thicker consistency when you pour it into the Belgian waffle maker. The batter should be a bit stiff, not runny. There are so many inventive recipe concepts and original "old time" cultural recipes to concoct, so use your Food Channel creativity, and have the type of interactive fun that you can actually eat.

Aloha,
Brett

PRODUCE SHOWCASE: LIMU OR OGO

What's that? Limu is the Hawaiian term for algae but the more specific variety of seaweed eaten by most goes by its Japanese term, Ogo. Locally, both are used interchangeably and is very well-known to most residents as a popular seaweed used extensively as an ingredient in various local dishes. It has a crunchy texture with an ocean-like salt water taste.

Source: Ogo grows well in Hawaii waters but recently has been over-harvested and is rarely found in the wild except by those who still have their "secret spots". Currently most fresh Ogo is grown and harvested in aquaculture farms here in Hawaii and on the west coast. Fresh Ogo can be found at certain local grocery stores and fish markets either in its raw state or prepared and ready to serve.

How to serve: Ogo is a very versatile produce popularized as the "Limu" in the limu ahi poke, however Ogo could also be used in salads, soups or prepared as a pickled side dish most commonly combined with onions, green onions, vinegar, sesame seed oil and chili pepper seasoning. Many recipes and ways to prepare Ogo can be found on the internet.

Nutritional value: Low in calories, one pound of Ogo contains about 45 calories. It's high in potassium providing around three times the amount of potassium by weight than bananas. In addition, studies show Ogo helps increase resistance to stress and fatigue, and like most sea vegetables it is rich in iron, several minerals and calcium.

